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SURPRISE AND DECEPTION IN JOINT WARFARE

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by

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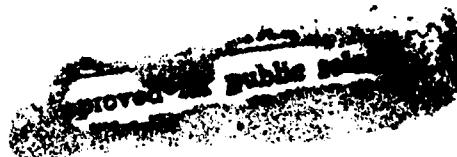
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Abstract of
SURPRISE AND DECEPTION IN JOINT WARFARE

The use of surprise and deception as a force multiplier in joint warfare is analyzed across the spectrum of conflict from *tactical* to *strategic* war with emphasis on joint warfare coordination. Current political realities have resulted in military downsizing and lack of public support for long-term military operations which cause excessive friendly and/or enemy casualties. Both of these factors often limit the joint commander from using a "brute force" option. The use of surprise and deception can yield decisive results rapidly and with limited casualties when applied effectively. This research covers theoretical studies, historical analysis, and current unclassified doctrine to define the foundations for successful deception operations and how they interact with modern technology in future armed struggles. In this regard, the complexity of modern warfare requires a permanent organization to coordinate deception planning continuously so that operations can be ready well prior to hostilities and can flow seamlessly from the war's outbreak to termination. Additionally, successful operations requires that deception activities are mutually supporting from the tactical to strategic levels. The concepts of Command and Control Warfare (C2W) provide the possibility for success but have yet to be fully implemented.

PREFACE

In addition to the extensive research of the sources listed in the bibliography, a great deal of knowledge on the subject of surprise and deception was gained from Dr. Michael I. Handel's elective course on Intelligence Policy and War. This course highlighted the opportunities that surprise and deception can give a commander and the hidden pitfalls that await ---- even if alerted. Informal discussions with FLEET TACTICAL READINESS GROUP ATLANTIC (formally FLEET DECEPTION GROUP ATLANTIC) provided insight into the status of C2W in the Navy and the direction that deception at the tactical and operational level is heading. The reader should be aware that substantial amounts of information on deception, both historical and current, are classified and are beyond the scope of this paper.

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SURPRISE AND DECEPTION IN JOINT WARFARE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Problem. The need to resort to "force of arms" to achieve a particular objective has been felt since man first walked. The ability to increase the chance of success of this violent action through deception and surprise has a history just as long. The ability to achieve surprise using deception or other techniques has waxed and waned since the dawn of civilization. What is now required is to analyze the basic concepts of surprise and deception and their possible applications in modern warfare. This paper will dissect the problem into each level of war and using theoretical background and historical evidence will develop lessons learned for future implementations.

One of the basic tenets of surprise is that it acts as a force multiplier which can rapidly yield decisive results with minimal casualties. Since the Vietnam War, the effects of public opinion (both internal and external) has often put extreme pressure on the national command authority to limit the duration of military operations and to ensure that any conflict did not result in excessive friendly or enemy casualties. Historical usage of stratagem is replete with battles that achieved those same goals; and hence, a possible example for future commanders to achieve military objectives while remaining within guidelines set by political

authorities. Additionally, military downsizing has reduced the amount of combat power that a joint commander may have available. Again, it will be proved that the principle of surprise, in conjunction with security, can make the assigned forces project more "effective" firepower than the enemy is capable of withstanding. The National Military strategy proclaims:

One of the essential elements of our national military strategy is the ability to rapidly assembly the forces needed to win ---- the concept of applying decisive force to overwhelm our adversaries and thereby terminate conflicts swiftly with a minimum loss of life.¹

The effective use of surprise and deception in joint warfare is the best method to achieve National Military Strategy goals.

Theoretical Background. The earliest known work on the theory of warfare, Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, heavily emphasized the application of deception to achieve victory. According to Sun Tzu, "all warfare is based on deception."² This principle was applied throughout the spectrum of national policy and was not to be restricted to military use only. The disrupting of the enemy's alliances, the subversion of his internal political structure, and the demoralization of his army were to be preludes to any military operation. If these non-military operations were successful, national objectives could be achieved without resulting to war --- which Sun Tzu called: "The acme of skill."³ The basis for modern

Psychological Operations (PSYOP) has been directly attributed to this wise Chinese sage.

Sun Tzu stressed deception at all levels of warfare from battlefield diversions (such as feints and simulated withdrawals) to strategic methods by deliberately feeding false information to the enemy through expendable agents and spies.⁴ The key to victory was a coordinated plan of deception to undermine an adversary's internal structure, his alliances, and his strategic planning prior to hostilities.⁵ Then, if required, to further deceive the enemy at all levels to support a decisive attack at the enemy's vulnerable point. Thus, the combination of deception and surprise is Sun Tzu's foundation for victory.

The next major theoretician on war is Carl von Clausewitz. The evolution of warfare over the preceding 2300 years to the time of Clausewitz had seen some technological changes and the massing of armies that eroded some of the strengths of deception but did not fade any of its basic truths. Clausewitz admitted that, "Surprise lies at the root of all operations without exception, though in widely varying degrees depending on the nature and circumstances of the operation."⁶ However, he further elaborated that: "While the wish to achieve surprise is common...[and] highly attractive in theory, in practice it is often held up by the friction of the whole machine."⁷ The dichotomy between Sun Tzu and Clausewitz resulted from two distinct reasons. First, Clausewitz concentrated at the operational and tactical levels

of war and only thought of surprise in the strict military sense. Secondly, The nature of warfare and "Levee en Masse" made the assembly and movement of armies highly visible. Diversion and deception was seen as the last resort of the weak and desperate⁸ and that the expenditure of resources in sham action distracted from the main effort.⁹ But close reading of the Prussian's views on cunning showed his underlying cause for discounting the effects of surprise: "In brief, the strategist's chessman do not have the kind of mobility that is essential for stratagem and cunning."¹⁰ In the final analysis, the technology of firepower and observation had overtaken that of mobility. This prevented a commander from effectively apply deception or achieving military surprise and formed the basis for Clausewitz conclusions.

Definitions. As with any field of endeavor, there are some terms that need to be precisely defined in order to fully grasp the subject. The clearest definition of deception is by Dr. Handel who described it as "a purposeful attempt by the deceiver to manipulate the perceptions of the target's decision makers in order to gain a competitive advantage."¹¹ In keeping with joint policy on standardization, the following definitions are from Joint Pub 1-02 and CJCS MOP 30.

Military Deception. Actions executed to mislead foreign decision makers, causing them to derive and accept desired appreciations of military capabilities, intentions,

operations, or other activities that evoke foreign actions that contribute to the originator's objectives.

Psychological Operations (PSYOP). Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign government organizations, groups, and individuals. The purpose of PSYOP is to induce or reinforce foreign attitudes and behavior favorable to the originator's objectives.

Command and Control Warfare (C2W). The integrated use of operations security (OPSEC), military deception, psychological operations (PSYOP), Electronic Warfare (EW) and physical destruction, mutually supported by intelligence, to deny information to, influence, degrade or destroy adversary C2 capabilities, while protecting friendly C2 capabilities against such actions. Command and Control Warfare applies across the operational continuum and all levels of conflict.

CHAPTER II

TACTICAL SURPRISE AND DECEPTION

Background. Up to the time of the eighteenth century most wars between nations were local in nature and were conducted primarily at the tactical level. The difficulties in communications made command and control very difficult and distant commanders often fought with near autonomous control of their forces. These difficulties prevented the application of surprise and deception at the higher levels of war after the commencement of hostilities. However, all of the classic elements of deception were originated at a very early stage. The limits of technology made each force roughly equal in weaponry; therefore, the principles of mass and surprise rose to the fore. From Biblical stories to the Trojan horse, deception was a widely practised element to gain tactical advantage.¹²

Innovative Tactics. One of the key methods to achieve surprise is to break out of expected operating patterns and fight using innovative methodology. The phalanx tactics of the ancient Greeks required that each hoplite carry his shield in his left hand and spear in his right. This made the extreme right wing somewhat vulnerable. Conventional military wisdom dictated that the best part of the army was to be given the honor of forming on the right to cover this critical vulnerability. The right wing then became the strongest part

of the force. Battles were then usually decided by which force was able to have its right wing turn the other forces left wing first and then follow through with a crushing flank attack.

During the year 371 BC, Thebes and Sparta were at war in the continuing series of Greek City-State rivalry. The Theban general, Epaminondas, unknowingly began to follow the ancient dictum of Sun Tzu --- Know your enemy and know yourself; in a hundred battles you will never be in peril.¹³ Knowing the Spartans would continue to fight in the established tradition, Epaminondas developed the innovative tactic of the oblique line to surprise the Spartans. His plan was to over-
strengthen his left wing and advance in an oblique line to the Spartans. This would allow for the Theban left wing to crush the Spartan right before the weaken Theban right became engaged. Although outnumbered and with inferior forces, Epaminondas effectively used innovative tactics to achieve surprise and decisively defeated the Spartan-lead coalition.¹⁴

Feigned Withdrawals. One of the oldest stratagems is to feign a retreat or withdrawal in order to lure the unsuspecting foe into an ambush. As discussed above, traditional methods can sometimes be used to mislead an enemy as to your intentions. Frederick the Great of Prussia was a master at using deception to achieve surprise and then rapidly exploited that surprise with shock action. Practically all European armies would finish their operations in November and would retreat to winter quarters to wait out the harsh winter months.

During early November 1757, the Allied Austro-French Army saw that the Prussian Army was apparently retreating and heading for possible winter quarters. In fact, Frederick was just withdrawing to more defensible terrain before reevaluating the tactical situation. As Frederick crossed Janus Hill on the outskirts of Rossback, he observed the Allied Army following in a ragged manner and without any reconnaissance patrols. Using Janus Hill both as an observation point to maintain continuous surveillance of the Allies and to provide cover for the redeployment of Prussian Forces, Frederick prepared to surprise the more numerous and over-confident Allied force. The plan was to use the shock of the Prussian Cavalry to break through Allied lines and to rout their force before they could take any defensive measures. Four thousand cavalry and 7 battalions of infantry defeated the 50,000 man allied force while suffering a scant 300

casualties. Allied loses were 800 dead, 6,000 captured, and 72 cannon in an action that lasted less than 90 minutes.¹⁵

CHAPTER III

OPERATIONAL SURPRISE AND DECEPTION

Background. Application of surprise and deception at the operational level required not only increased mobility but increased command and control as well. The rapid growth of technology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries allowed for the implementation of deception on a scale never conceived of before. The ability to use camouflage, and dummies to mislead aerial reconnaissance and the ability to simulate notional units through radio traffic provided new ground to innovative commanders.

Innovative Tactics. As Epaminondas discovered, unorthodox tactics can often surprise and lead to the defeat of a superior opponent. Following the catastrophe of the First World War, the German High Command began to experiment with new technology in order to develop a new method of mobile warfare to supplant the horrors of static trench warfare. By the mid-1930's, Hitler had institutionalized *Blitzkrieg* as the offensive doctrine of the *Wehrmacht*.¹⁶ One of the major differences in *Blitzkrieg* from early combined arms, mobile doctrines was the emphasis placed on disorientation and deception. In particular, deception was the central element at every phase of operation. During the breakthrough, feints and demonstrations would be used to mislead enemy forces as to the axis of the attack. During the penetration, the rapid

movement of the armored forces gave the speed and momentum required to achieve unpredictability. The culmination of shock and disorientation allowed for the inferior German forces to encircle and capture numerically superior forces.¹⁷ Thus, the theory of surprise which Clausewitz said could not be achieved was now a virtual reality a short century later.

The synergistic effect of combined air and armored operations delivered unprecedented firepower on the battlefield. However, the integration of surprise and deception is what truly gave teeth to this innovative doctrine. Hitler was actually under some of the same political restraints forced by public opinion that we face today. Hitler demanded an offensive doctrine that could yield decisive results through speed and surprise so that Germany could avoid the internal strains that wrenched the nation during World War I.¹⁸ Hitler stated: "How can I expect to wage war if I drive the masses into the same state of apathy that they were in during 1917-18?"¹⁹ *Blitzkrieg* had all the sound and fury of total war, but only the material cost and duration of limited war.²⁰

Ruses. One of the most economically ways to reinforce an enemy's misperception is through the use of ruses. Ruses of War date before the time of Sun Tzu; however, its use at the operational level was not seen prior to World War I and General Allenby's campaign in the Mideast. General Allenby's initial attack was against Beersheba in Palestine and used

what is known as a "double bluff". This deception technique presents the main attack as a diversion intended to draw attention away from the "main attack" at Gaza.²¹ This deception has great advantages when it works. The adversary (Ottoman Turk) continues to neglect the attack even after it begins since he is still poised to repulse the "main attack". General Allenby used every trick in the book and invented some new ones in order to facilitate his operational success.

The most famous of these activities became known as the "haversack ruse". This deception entailed having a British officer "lose" his haversack containing the plans and documents for the upcoming offensive against Gaza and other personal effects to mark the find as genuine. Allenby's staff followed up on the ruse by instigating a search for the documents and convening a court of inquiry for the careless officer. Other deceptive measures were implemented in concert with the haversack ruse to provide supporting evidence of the Gaza Offensive. These included camouflage, notional units, bogus radio signals, and force demonstrations. The impact of the deception was not 100 percent successful, but did achieve its goals of delaying Turkish reaction to the British offensive.

General Allenby continued to use variations on this deception theme during his advances through 1918. His conditioning methods and variations made the Turks doubt every piece of information they received and allowed Allenby to execute Offensive operations on the scale that was not scene

in World War I.²² Fortunately for the British, the lessons learned by Allenby were not lost during the inter-war years. General Wavell, who was CinC Middle East 1939-41, served on Allenby's staff during the Palestine Campaign and was Allenby's official biographer. The creation of "A" Force to coordinate deception planning in the Mideast Theatre and the subsequent establishment of the London Controlling Section (LCS) to coordinate deception planning at the national level were all products of Wavell's lessons from Allenby. One of the most famous ruses of World War II, "The Man Who Never Was", which delivered bogus documents to the Germans in support of the Allied landings in Sicily bear a striking resemblance to the haversack ruse.²³

Deception during the Second World War began at the tactical and operational levels. The weakness of the British strategic position required them to immediately resort to cunning to offset extreme inferiority in overall military power. However, the availability of Signals Intelligence (ULTRA) from MI-6, Special Means (Double agents controlled by section Bla of MI-5), combined to give deception planners highly reliable ways to pass deception to the enemy with highly reliable methods of verifying the success of the deception. The success of this operation led to the first national organization to oversee all aspects of deception at the national strategic level.

CHAPTER IV

STRATEGIC SURPRISE AND DECEPTION

Background. As technological development allowed for the first use of operational surprise and deception in World War I, the continuation of these developments and combined with lessons learned from World War I allowed for the Allies (primarily the British and the Americans) to conduct strategic surprise and deception operations from 1941 until war termination. Previously, the only types of strategic surprises that had been conducted were of the Diplomatic nature or initial surprise attacks. After the commencement of hostilities, strategic surprise was no longer possible to achieve.

Tactical deception consists of misleading the enemy about one's intentions/capabilities within a specific battle area. In strategic deception, the object is to persuade one's opponent that the strategic focus is in an entirely different place.²⁴

Diplomatic Surprise. Sun Tzu continuously stressed the need to subdue the enemy without fighting and to disrupt the enemy's alliances²⁵ The ability to achieve this goals can be brought about through diplomatic surprise. The effects that aggressive foreign policy can play to set the stage for subsequent military operations is enormous. This type of

initiative can even be used during hostilities to bring addition pressure to bear on an adversary.

Colonial America used this strategic surprise element quite successfully during the American War for Independence. By using the European Balance of power to their best advantage and by entering into a military alliance with Great Britain's enemies, the colonies were able to expand the strategic scope of the war and bring substantial military forces to bear with little expenditure of resources. King George III himself acknowledged the desperate situation and wrote: "A land war against the colonies combined with war with France and Spain must be feeble in all parts and consequently unsuccessful."²⁶ Hitler used diplomatic surprise in a way seldom seen when he absorbed Rhineland, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. His seemingly impossible alliance between Facist Germany and the Communist Soviet Union again surprised most western observers and allowed Hitler to continue his offensive against France without worry from the east.

Coordinated Deception Planning. At the beginning of the Second World War deception operations were conducted on an ad hoc basis only. General Wavell began to correct the problem and formulated a Theatre-wide deception plan through the establishment of "A" force in Cairo.²⁷ The success of the operation and the lack of any at the strategic level drove the Chiefs of Staff Committee in London to enquire of General Wavell and his "A" Force commander, LTC Dudley Clarke, of his

lessons learned at the operational level and what could be applied in London to manage the national deception plan. The outcome of this discussion was the establishment of the London Controlling Section which developed national strategic level deception planning and coordinated this plan with each of the operational level planning staffs (such as "A" Force). At the national level every method was used to enhance the "reality" of deception planning. The Special Operations Executive (SOE), MI-6, MI-5, XX Committee, and the service staffs coordinated deception planning with the goal to:

- (a) simulate intentions which are plausible
- (b) reach the enemy through as many as possible of his normal channels of information
- (c) to this end be backed by real evidence of troop movements, shipping, signal traffic, etc. Moreover it is impossible to develop strategic deception on a large scale unless our general strategy is clearly defined and likely to be adhered to. In the absence of firm strategic policy, any deception plan entails the grave risk of drawing the enemy's attention to a move which may in fact prove to be one we really want to make when the time comes.²⁸

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

Although the need to resort to deception and surprise is felt by weaker side, the militarily strong should always attempt to maximize the effect of their operations through all available methods, especially using surprise and deception. In order to deceive the enemy, your intelligence assets must fully understand the enemy's language, history, culture, and military traditions. The best application of deception is to reinforce an existing misperception. The methods of misleading the enemy to believe the deception should cover as wide a range as possible, but not such that it appears too easy.

The development of deception planning should begin at the national level with regard to National Security and National Military goals. This information should then be coordinated with the respective Unified Commander so that theatre planning will run in conjunction with and not counter to national policy. National Intelligence assets should provide the necessary profile of the target nation to all deception planners. Once the Unified Commander has generated operational plans to support the assigned Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan. National C2W planners should develop deception plans that support the regional objectives and provides "special means" to disseminate the deception through national assets if available. SIGINT support from NSA/CSS should then provide

validation of the success of the C2W effort back to the national C2W planning staff.

The success of the London Controlling Section proved that, in complex deception operations, permanent organizations must be in place to continuously monitor and modify deception plans to ensure their integration between theaters and that it is supporting strategic objectives. The United States lagged behind the British in the development and implementation of deception as evidenced by the difference between the European and Pacific Theaters of War. Following World War Two, the U.S. has consistently fallen into the trap that cunning is the refuge of the weak and has therefore neglected its use.

The advent of Command and Control Warfare shows that the U.S. is acknowledging the capability of deception in joint warfare. However, no permanent organization to coordinate national strategic policy has been established. The powers as "Controlling Officer" has been retained by the Chairman, JCS with liaison contacts between each of the services, component agencies and unified commanders. The doctrine of C2W can provide the methodology to achieve spectacular success with little to no casualties ---- but only if it is used. To date, the C2W organization is going through substantial growing pains without any effective leadership at the national level. Until such a controlling section is established, C2W military deception will continue to be conducted on an ad hoc basis and as an adjunct to the operation instead of an integral part of the planning process.

NOTES

- ¹U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategy of the United States*. (Washington, DC: 1992), p. 10.
- ²Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*. trans. Samuel B. Griffith. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 66.
- ³*Ibid.*, p. 77.
- ⁴Michael I. Handel, *Masters of War: Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Jomini*. (Portland, OR: Frank Cass & Co., 1992), p. 103.
- ⁵*Ibid.*, p. 104-5.
- ⁶Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*. ed. and trans. Sir Michael Howard and Peter Paret. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 198.
- ⁷*Ibid.*, p. 198-99.
- ⁸Handel, *Masters of War*, p. 105.
- ⁹Clausewitz, p. 203.
- ¹⁰*Ibid.*
- ¹¹Michael I. Handel, *War, Strategy and Intelligence*, (New Jersey: Frank Cass & Co., Limited, 1989), p. 310.
- ¹²*Ibid.*, p. 362.
- ¹³Sun Tzu, p. 84.
- ¹⁴Simon Goodenough, *Tactical Genius in Battle*. (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1979), p. 10-12.
- ¹⁵Thomas E. Griess, ed. *The Dawn of Modern Warfare*. (Wayne, NJ: Avery Publishing Group Inc., 1984), p. 119-121.
- ¹⁶Michael I. Handel, ed. *Leaders and Intelligence*. (Portland, OR: Frank Cass & Co., Limited, 1989), p. 88.
- ¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 89.
- ¹⁸*Ibid.*
- ¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 90.
- ²⁰*Ibid.*
- ²¹Handel, *War Strategy and Intelligence*, p. 367.
- ²²*Ibid.*, p. 370-4

²³Ibid., p. 367

²⁴ultra goes to war 358

²⁵sun tzu 77-80.

²⁶Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause, The American Revolution 1763-1789*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 407-408.

²⁷Michael Howard, *British Intelligence in the Second World War*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1990. v. V.) (Strategic Deception), p. 22.

²⁸Ibid., p. 26.

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